DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 302 886 EA 020 526

AUTHOR Klein, Gerald A.
TITLE State Level Perspective of the Model: The State Department of Education as a Change Agent.
PUB DATE Apr 88
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 5-9, 1988).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Development; *Educational Innovation; Elementary Secondary Education; Program Descriptions; Program Evaluation; Program Validation; *State Legislation; *State Programs; *State School District Relationship; Validated Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Georgia; Quality Basic Education Act (Georgia)

ABSTRACT

Section 20-2-250 of Georgia's Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act, passed in March, 1985, provides for three types of innovative activities: developmental projects, training center/dissemination projects, and adoption projects. This part of the Act is administered by the Georgia Department of Education under the Innovation Program. The activities are evaluated by a small cadre of highly trained and qualified "state validators," who review the developmental projects on-site and make recommendations to the state superintendent of schools for certification. This document describes each of the three types of projects funded under the Innovation Program and the mechanisms for funding, implementing, and evaluating these projects. The last part then reviews the development projects that have been established and funded since 1985. In summary, the state of Georgia has an organized, managed delivery system for educational improvement that encompasses development through dissemination and involves the cooperative efforts of state staff, university staff, and local system staff. (TE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED302886

State Level Perspective of the Model
The State Department of Education as a Change Agent

by

Gerald A. Klein
Georgia Department of Education

Paper presented at Symposium
"A Model for Educational Improvement:
An Example of Megaevaluation"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Gerald A. Klein

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

American Educational Research Association
New Orleans, April 6, 1988

EA 020 526

State Level Perspective of the Model: The State Department of Education as A Change Agent

The State Department of Education has the role of providing leadership within the state to improve the educational delivery system. The legal authority to set policy, grant funds, establish procedures, and administer programs rests with the State Board of Education. The power to appropriate funds and establish statutes that affect the educational delivery system in the state rests with the legislature. Further, it is the staff of the State Department of Education that must provide the leadership and technical assistance to local school systems to operationalize and maintain this educational delivery system. To this end a functioning state-level model for educational improvement has been implemented in Georgia.

In the Spring of 1983 the Governor appointed a "blue ribbon" task force, the Educational Review Commission, to study the current status of education in the state of Georgia and to make recommendations for broad far-reaching changes that would improve the quality of education in the state. The findings of this task force and their recommendations were formulated into comprehensive legislation and passed by the General Assembly in March of 1985. This legislation, the Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act, is the statute that governs the educational delivery system in this state.

One part of this Act, Section 20-2-250, provides for three types of innovative activities: developmental projects, training center/dissemination projects, and adoption projects. This part of the Act is managed and administered by state staff of the Georgia Department of Education under the Innovation Program. The quality control of the projects funded under the

Innovation Program is assured through the use and expertise of a small cadre of highly trained and qualified "state validators". These individuals are specially selected local system personnel and university staff who meet an established set of criteria. They have been trained in a two day workshop on the state validation process. These individuals review the developmental projects on-site and make recommendations to the State Superintendent of Schools. The State Superintendent of Schools is the only one who can actually certify the developmental project as state validated. Many times university staff from the cadre are selected to serve as the project evaluator to help guide the evaluation process of the project so it will be capable of meeting the state validation criteria. This process assures the quality of the project under development and it helps assure that, if the data are statistically and educationally significant at the end of the developmental period, the project can demonstrate effectiveness and also be exportable throughout the state. Indeed, this management process is a combined effort of state staff, local system staff, and university staff to bring about quality improvement efforts.

There are three types of projects funded under the Innovation Program. Each is designed to perform a specific function and service across the state and this is stated within the language of the Act. The developmental projects must address priorities passed by the State Board, must have the potential for widespread adoption throughout the state, must be able to meet the state validation criteria, and must be cost effective in terms of exportability. A local fair share match to this project effort is required. The training center/dissemination projects are developmental efforts that have been state validated and are now capable of disseminating

their program throughout the state. No local fair share match is required. The training center has the funding support necessary to provide awareness information, training, follow-up, and evaluation services to any school system in the state at no cost to the school system. The adoption project is a small grant to local school systems to help them defray the initial cost of adopting a validated project from one of the training centers. This small grant helps support the local costs of paying substitutes to release teachers for staff development, travel to observe the validated project, and the initial start up materials necessary to implement the project. A local fair share match to this project effort is required. The local fair share match establishes a commitment at the local level to the project effort.

In March of 1985 the legislature appropriated $288,000 to support four initial developmental projects. In 1986 this was increased to $548,000 to support two training centers and approximately 40 adoption grants. The funding remained at this level for 1987. In 1988 the Governor's request that is being considered by the legislature has been increased to $670,500. The majority of this increase is to support developmental projects that will be state validated and move into training center status. Further it will support 100 additional adoption grants for systems wanting to adopt these new validated programs. This funding level is still far below the recommendation of the Education Review Commission which stated 1 million dollars the first year, an additional million each year thereafter up to 5 million which would remain as the continued level of program funding.

The state level management system for the Innovation Program addresses priorities established by the State Board of Education. Developmental

proposals are requested that address these priorities. These proposals are read and rated by a reader panel composed of certified state validators. Each proposal is read by at least three readers. The proposals are then ranked. The top proposals are then read and rated by an evaluation expert from the state validator cadre. These ratings along with reviews by department staff determine which proposals are submitted to the State Board for funding. Developmental projects are funded for one year and may receive additional funding on an annual basis up to three years based on successful completion of each year's efforts. Each project is evaluated annually and reviewed on-site by a four member team of certified state validators.

Training center/dissemination projects are successful developmental projects that have been either state validated or are highly successful adoptions of validated projects from other states which have been state certified here as effective. These training centers are fully funded to provide a broad range of services to school systems across the state. These services include awareness information, training/staff development, follow-up technical assistance, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the adoption. These training centers are located in local school systems but function as an arm or extension of the state agency. As such, they get their direction from the state staff and coordinate their activities with the state staff. Very successful adoptions of these training center programs are certified as exemplary sites. These sites then serve as satellites of the training center for other school systems to visit and observe the program.

The adoption projects are small grants of approximately $2500 funded to local school systems that are adopting a training center

program. These grants are provided to help defray the initial start-up costs of released time for teachers for training, travel to the training center for training or to observe the project in action, and the teacher and student materials necessary to initially implement the project in the school system. Thus, the state level management system for dissemination is cyclical in nature in that only the projects that meet state priorities are funded as training centers. Adoption grants are awarded only to school systems adopting projects from a training center. Thus, state funds are only used to support those improvement efforts that meet the priorities established by the State Board.

Supportive technical assistance from the state agency is provided to all funded (and non-funded) projects on a continuous basis. Most projects are visited every four to six weeks to review their progress, to help foresee and solve problems, and to develop project staff in the management skills necessary to guide the project. This approach establishes a better rapport with the project staff than the usual "monitoring" approach used by other programs. While providing supportive technical assistance it is also possible to be sure the project is meeting appropriate state guidelines and regulations.

Leadership is provided by state staff to the directors of developmental projects and training centers. The directors of developmental projects are usually local system staff well grounded in the content area of the project, but who usually lack broad curriculum, staff development and evaluation experience as well as project organization and management experience. Thus, they need support in developing these skills and they need help in

identifying and securing expert resources to accomplish specific tasks. The directors of training centers usually have been involved in the developmental project phase but lack project management skills in the areas of public relations, marketing, training, follow-up technical assistance and evaluation. Thus, they need support in developing these skills and they need help in developing key contacts across the state. Indeed these training centers are supported by resources from the state level for the primary purpose of providing training services to all school systems across the state. The directors of these training centers receive their direction and supervision in project activities from the state agency and are considered a dissemination arm of that agency.

Although the evaluation design for each developmental project is specific and unique to the project, care is taken to use, where possible, the assessment instruments that are a part of the state assessment program. There are several reasons for this. Students do not need to be tested any more than necessary. Testing also takes up instructional time. Testing is also expensive. Further, in the training center process, effectiveness data are collected from adoption sites and the use of already available data helps simplify this process.

In the summer of 1985, four developmental projects were funded. At the end of the first year, the initial evaluation data showed some progress on all projects. At the end of the second year, the evaluation data were spotty across all the projects. This was very evident in the two large comprehensive projects, a middle school math and science project and an elementary demonstration "school of excellence" project. It was finally

determined that a major reason for the spotty data was the fact that the control schools were competing and actually doing the improvement activity in some areas. In addition, the emphasis in the state for improvement because of QBE had caused more improvement activities at all levels in the state. Because of this the developmental project site (experimental school) had to perform at even greater improvement levels to obtain data results that were significant. In the third year of these projects, the major focus was on evaluation. Finally, in December of 1987 the first developmental project, the elementary demonstration "school of excellence", was state validated in grades one through four in Reading and Math. Additional data were still being collected at the kindergarten and fifth grade level.

In the summer of 1986, two more developmental projects were funded. At the end of the first year, these also had spotty data. In one case, through a quirk, the control students were actually receiving more treatment than the experimental students. In the second year of funding on these projects, again an increased focus was placed on the evaluation component. Hopefully all of the existing developmental projects will have adequate data to demonstrate effectiveness according to the state validation criteria by the early summer of 1988.

Three training centers have been in operation during this last year: a writing project, a math project, and an early intervention project. In March of 1988, a fourth training center, the newly validated developmental project at the elementary school, was funded to serve local school systems across the state. Currently, adoption grant funds to local school systems

are also available to adopt the programs from these training centers. The impact of these training centers in the state is clearly evident over the last two years as depicted by the following data:

Training Center Programs	Number of schools adopting programs	
	1986-87	1987-88 to date
Dalton ILA - K-12 Writing Project	137	30
Oconee STAMM - K-12 Math Project	68	18
Houston ECPC - Early Intervention Project		16

In summary, the State of Georgia has an organized, managed delivery system for educational improvement that encompasses development through dissemination and it involves the cooperative efforts of the state staff, the university staff, and the local system staff.